



# BERNARDSTON

## Franklin County



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## NARRATIVE

### **Narrative**

Bernardston is a rural commercial center abutting the Vermont border and located on the primary corridor between Greenfield and Vermont. The town is known for its mountain peaks and its black slate quarries which supplied local gravestone carvers in the early 19th century.

The town was settled during the mid-18th century with a series of forts designed to protect the corridor during the French and Indian wars.

Despite its fertile land in the Fall River Valley, the vulnerability of the town to the danger of Indian attack were so great as to delay its development between 1744 and 1760, when the danger ended. Despite these delays, Bernardston is reported to be one of the first towns in the state to begin commercial production of maple syrup and sugar.

The town had an early agricultural economy, raising corn and rye for its numerous distilleries, and along with abutting Northfield, raising 86% of the hops produced in the county. The industrial sector of the community operated six saw mills, two grist mills and produced 15,000 scythes annually. Bernardston has focussed on dairy farming in modern times and along with its rural character, has retained its especially spacious village center. The center contains a mix of domestic architecture from the 18th to the 20th century, interspersed with churches and public and commercial buildings. Residents pride themselves on the fact that most original architecture is intact and that significant groups of buildings still exist in their original settings throughout the village area.

The most significant historic buildings, however, may well be Fort Connable (1739), one of the few remaining fortified houses left from the early 18th century, and the turbine powered sawmill which has possibly the last remaining cable driven mill in New England.

(Seal supplied by community. Narrative based on information provided by the Massachusetts Historical Commission)



# GEOGRAPHY

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## Location

Northwestern Massachusetts, bordered by Guilford and Vernon, Vermont, on the north; Northfield on the east; Gill on the southeast; Greenfield on the southwest; and Leyden on the west. Bernardston is 7 miles north of Greenfield and 100 miles northwest of Boston.

**Total Area:** 23.41 sq. miles

**Land Area:** 23.41 sq. miles

**Population:** 2,048

**Density:** 87 per sq. mile

## Climate

(National Climatic Data Center)

(Amherst Station)

Normal temperature in January.....23.6°F

Normal temperature in July.....71.9°F

Normal annual precipitation.....42.5"

## U.S.G.S. Topographical Plates

Bernardston, Northfield

## Regional Planning Agency

Franklin County

## Metropolitan Statistical Area

(1993 Definition)



# GOVERNMENT

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## Municipal Offices

Main Number: (413) 648-9342

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

## Form of Government

Board of Selectmen

Administrative Assistant

Open Town Meeting

## Year Incorporated

As a town: 1762

## Registered Voters (Secretary of State 1994)

	Number	%	
Total Registered	1,357		
Democrats	153	11.3	%
Republicans	223	16.4	%
Other parties	0	0.0	%
Unenrolled Voters	981	72.3	%

## Legislators

[Senators and Representatives by City and Town](#)



# DEMOGRAPHICS

**Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000**

Geographic Area: Bernardston town, Franklin County, Massachusetts

[For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see text]

Subject	Number	Percent	Subject	Number	Percent
Total population.....	2,155	100.0	HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE		
SEX AND AGE			Total population.....	2,155	100.0
Male.....	1,065	49.0	Hispanic or Latino (of any race).....	10	0.5
Female.....	1,100	51.0	Mexican.....	3	0.1
Under 5 years.....	88	4.1	Puerto Rican.....	5	0.2
5 to 9 years.....	119	5.5	Cuban.....	-	-
10 to 14 years.....	165	7.7	Other Hispanic or Latino.....	2	0.1
15 to 19 years.....	171	7.9	Not Hispanic or Latino.....	2,145	99.5
20 to 24 years.....	78	3.6	White alone.....	2,128	98.7
25 to 34 years.....	209	9.7	RELATIONSHIP		
35 to 44 years.....	371	17.2	Total population.....	2,155	100.0
45 to 54 years.....	380	17.6	In households.....	2,134	99.0
55 to 59 years.....	129	6.0	Householder.....	848	99.4
60 to 64 years.....	96	4.5	Spouse.....	495	23.0
65 to 74 years.....	183	8.5	Child.....	615	28.5
75 to 84 years.....	121	5.6	Own child under 18 years.....	453	21.0
85 years and over.....	45	2.1	Other relatives.....	67	3.1
Median age (years).....	42.1	(X)	Under 18 years.....	30	1.4
18 years and over.....	1,862	77.1	Nonrelatives.....	109	5.1
Male.....	797	37.0	Unmarried partner.....	63	2.9
Female.....	865	40.1	In group quarters.....	21	1.0
21 years and over.....	1,589	73.7	Institutionalized population.....	4	0.2
62 years and over.....	414	19.2	Noninstitutionalized population.....	17	0.8
65 years and over.....	349	16.2	HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE		
Male.....	148	6.9	Total households.....	848	100.0
Female.....	201	9.3	Family households (families).....	604	71.2
RACE			With own children under 18 years.....	267	31.5
One race.....	2,141	99.4	Married-couple family.....	495	58.4
White.....	2,134	99.0	With own children under 18 years.....	199	23.5
Black or African American.....	2	0.1	Female householder, no husband present.....	81	9.6
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	-	-	With own children under 18 years.....	50	5.9
Asian.....	-	-	Nonfamily households.....	244	28.8
Asian Indian.....	-	-	Householder living alone.....	187	22.1
Chinese.....	-	-	Householder 65 years and over.....	88	10.4
Filipino.....	-	-	Households with individuals under 18 years.....	289	34.1
Japanese.....	-	-	Households with individuals 65 years and over.....	244	28.8
Korean.....	-	-	Average household size.....	2.52	(X)
Vietnamese.....	-	-	Average family size.....	2.95	(X)
Other Asian <sup>1</sup> .....	-	-	HOUSING OCCUPANCY		
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	1	-	Total housing units.....	879	100.0
Native Hawaiian.....	1	-	Occupied housing units.....	848	96.5
Guamanian or Chamorro.....	-	-	Vacant housing units.....	31	3.5
Samoa.....	-	-	For seasonal, recreational, or		
Other Pacific Islander <sup>2</sup> .....	-	-	occasional use.....	17	1.9
Some other race.....	4	0.2	Homeowner vacancy rate (percent).....	0.9	(X)
Two or more races.....	14	0.6	Rental vacancy rate (percent).....	1.3	(X)
Race alone or in combination with one			HOUSING TENURE		
or more other races: <sup>3</sup>			Occupied housing units.....	848	100.0
White.....	2,148	99.7	Owner-occupied housing units.....	692	81.6
Black or African American.....	3	0.1	Renter-occupied housing units.....	156	18.4
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	7	0.3	Average household size of owner-occupied units.....	2.64	(X)
Asian.....	5	0.2	Average household size of renter-occupied units.....	1.95	(X)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	2	0.1			
Some other race.....	5	0.2			

- Represents zero or rounds to zero. (X) Not applicable.

<sup>1</sup> Other Asian alone, or two or more Asian categories.

<sup>2</sup> Other Pacific Islander alone, or two or more Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander categories.

<sup>3</sup> In combination with one or more of the other races listed. The six numbers may add to more than the total population and the six percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.



# HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

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**Home Sales** (Banker & Tradesman) -

[Town Stats - Free market Statistics](#)

**Subsidized Housing Units** (DHCD 1998)

[DHCD Subsidized Housing Inventory](#)

Subsidized Housing Units: The number of housing units which count toward the municipality's 10% goal for low- and moderate-income housing. It includes both subsidized affordable units and market rate units in certain eligible subsidized developments.

**Public Housing Units** (DHCD 1999)

Conventional State: 0

Conventional Federal: 0

**Rental Assistance**(DHCD 1999)

State (MRVP: 0

Federal (Section 8): 0



# TRANSPORTATION

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## TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

The major axes of transportation in Franklin County, where Bernardston is located, are State Route 2 and Interstate Route 91, which follows the Connecticut River. The region is well-served by rail. The Springfield Terminal Railway lines (the former Boston and Maine Railroad) parallel the two major highways, and the Central Vermont Railway's main line passes N-S through the eastern portion of the county.

### Major Highways

Principal highways are U.S. Route 5 and Interstate 91 running N-S across Massachusetts.

### Rail

Freight rail service is available from the Springfield Terminal Railway. Contact number: (508) 663-1073.

### Bus

Bernardston is a member of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority. There is no fixed route service. (FRTA) provides paratransit services for the elderly and disabled through the Bernardston/Northfield Council on Aging.

### Other

The Turners Falls Municipal Airport, a General Aviation (GA) facility, is easily accessible. It has a 3,013'x 75' asphalt runway. Instrument approaches available: Non-precision.



# CULTURE AND RECREATION

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## LIBRARIES

[Board of Library Commissioners On-line Library Catalog](#)

## MUSEUMS

(American Association of Museums)

None

## RECREATION

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

**Recreational Facilities** (Recreational sites and activities)

[Department of Environmental Management Recreation Section](#)



# MISCELLANEOUS

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## HEALTH FACILITIES

(Dept. of Public Health 1992)

### Hospitals

None

### Long Term Care

None

### Hospices

None

### Rest Homes

None

### UTILITIES

[Telephone Numbers for Public Utilities](#)



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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NOTE: The COMMUNITY PROFILE draws information from a diversity of sources. The main source of information is listed under each section. In some instances comments submitted by the municipality were incorporated to correct and/or enhance the information obtained from the main source. However, no changes were made to those data bases which must be consistent throughout the state. DHCD has made efforts to ensure the accuracy of all data in the COMMUNITY PROFILES, but cannot take responsibility for any consequences arising from the use of the information contained in this document.